

This support document to *The Formative Years* is intended to assist the teacher in working with children at three different stages of reading in the Primary and Junior divisions.

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Introduction

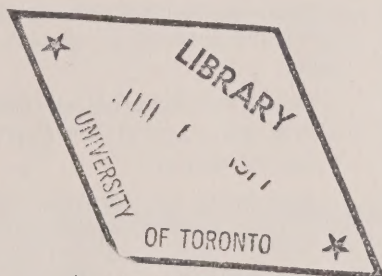
This document is intended to assist the teacher in working with children at three different stages of reading:

a the beginning stage (pp. 1-6);

b the stage where the child is becoming more independent and is beginning to use reading as a source of pleasure and information (pp. 6-10);

c the stage where the child extends his or her reading skills to cope with an increasing variety of reading materials (pp. 10-13).

The document outlines objectives and describes a number of learning episodes for each of the three stages. These learning episodes, based on actual experiences in and out of the classroom, are interrelated and follow a progressive sequence: each situation extends into the one that follows. Each episode includes statements on the child's experience, the adult's role in the activity, and the progress in reading that may be expected.



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An Approach to Reading

Beginning Reading

General Objectives

1. to help children discover that books and other printed materials are a source of enjoyment, information, and personal enrichment;

For this purpose the teacher should:

— read aloud daily from a rich variety of materials such as collections of nursery rhymes, poetry, folk tales, and legends;

— select books and reading activities related to the child's current interests, questions, and investigations;

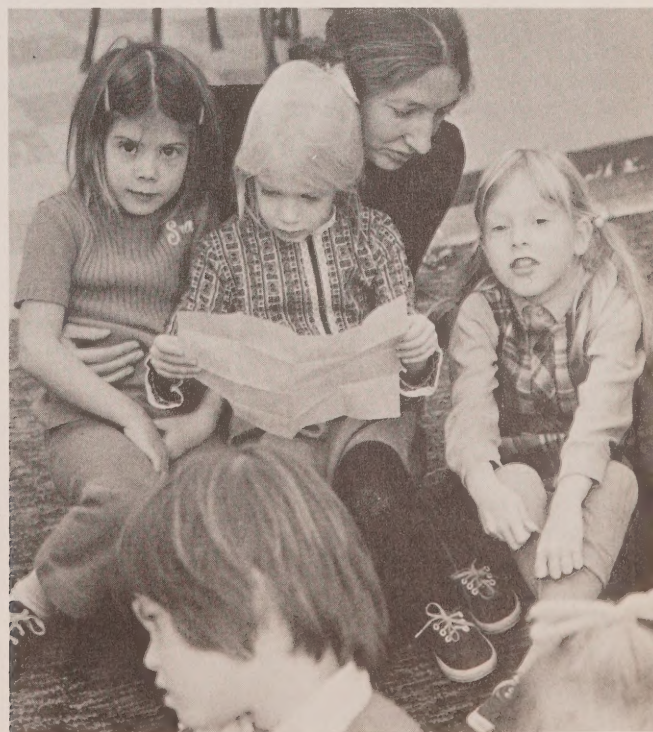
— relate reading to the environment and daily activities of the child through frequent use of a variety of symbols such as clocks, calendars, dials, menus, thermometers, street signs, food labels, and telephone directories.

2. to develop the large reservoir of meanings that children need in order to be able to attach meanings to printed symbols;

To accomplish this the teacher should:

— provide numerous experiences of personal significance to the child (these should involve smelling, touching, tasting, seeing, listening, and using a variety of media and materials);

— provide the words, phrases, and expressions a child will need.



3. to enable children to read;

The teacher should:

- encourage each child to express his or her thoughts and feelings in a variety of ways;
- transcribe these expressions into written language and use them as the child's first reading materials.

4. to provide alternatives so that the child may develop his or her own strategies for coping with symbols;

The teacher should:

- encourage each child to accumulate a stock of favourite words and phrases that he or she can recognize on sight;
- provide many opportunities for children to reinforce personal recognition strategies by using their own words in a variety of activities (manipulating word cards, copying, writing, swapping, sorting into various categories, comparing and ordering them into new sentence structures);
- recognize that different children need different approaches and materials.

5. to help each child develop more efficient ways of decoding;

The teacher should:

- draw the child's attention to similarities and differences in the visual and sound units that characterize words;
- provide experiences that will allow each child to learn to discriminate among the visual and auditory cues that he or she will use initially to unlock words (such experiences might include hearing, seeing, producing, and playing with a variety of language patterns, rhymes, sounds, and rhythms);
- reinforce word recognition strategies in meaningful ways (e.g., by playing word games, engaging in listening and speaking activities, expressing and responding using a variety of materials, reading easy-to-read books, picture books, extracts from basal readers, and booklets produced by peers).

6. to support the interdependent nature of all communication skills;

The teacher should:

- plan activities with the children that will enable the skills of observation, listening, speaking, reading, and writing to grow interdependently.

7. to serve a child's need for accomplishment and personal satisfaction by allowing the child to grow into reading at his or her own pace and in an individual way;

The teacher should:

- observe, listen to, and interact with each child in order to identify specific learning styles and stages of development, and to match materials and techniques to the needs of the individual;
- provide children who do not respond readily to visual symbols with alternate strategies for coping with print (one example would be a *visual motor approach*: with the help of the teacher, the child takes a word from a meaningful context, sees it written on a card, says it, traces it, writes it in sand or salt, writes it from memory, and tries to find it and use it in many new contexts);
- allow children to use their own language patterns or dialect in reading while providing them with experiences, both real and vicarious, that will increase their language power.

The next section of this support document contains three teacher-learning episodes built around children's experiences with water. The episodes clearly indicate what the child does and what the adult does.

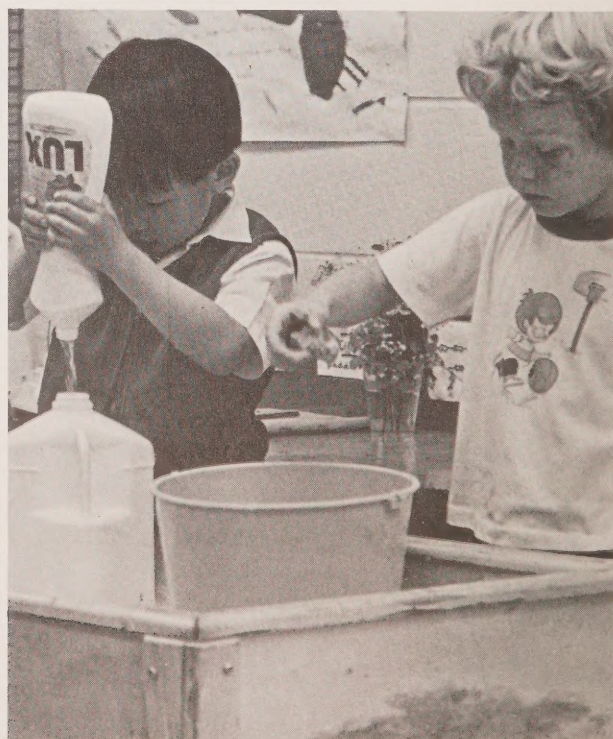
Teaching-Learning Episodes

Episode 1 Building a reservoir of meanings

The Experience

The children extend their understanding of words and ideas connected with water by:

- exploring the properties of water and the reactions of different objects (corks, sponges, colours, and soap) to water;
- hearing each other use new language patterns or words such as *splash*, *squirt*, *funnel*, *sieve*, *hose*, *siphon*, *pour*, *slurp*, and *squeegy*;
- using in play the language, sounds, and actions associated with firemen, sailors, plumbers, drainpipes, and sewers.



The adult guides and extends these understandings by:

- encouraging the children to express themselves freely;
- elaborating on the children's rudimentary statements;
- directing the children's attention to specific details (*I wonder what would happen if...? How does it feel? Which objects sink? Which float? Why?*);
- providing other words related to the experience (*hose, detergent, fluid, slimy, liquid, warm, compare, measure, lukewarm*);
- recording and taping the children's language at the water centre for subsequent use;
- if appropriate, using the tapes to facilitate recall and to summarize and assess vocabulary and language development;
- adding new props such as beakers, food colouring, a pump, ice cubes, hot water, measuring cups, sponges, or corn oil to the water centre, and related books, pictures, filmstrips, objects, and word cards to other areas in the classroom.

Reading Possibilities

The adult can use the child's language and experience to give meaning to printed symbols by:

- replaying the recording of the children's language at the water table and asking them questions to facilitate recall of discoveries and vocabulary;
- helping the children to sort, classify, and summarize in order to encourage them to listen, repeat, interpret through action, and select favourite words and expressions;
- printing favourite words on a large chart, perhaps labelled "Words We Use";

— using the chart as a resource for children who need words for stories; as a focus for games like "I Spy", "Match" (words and pictures), and "Swap" (words for pictures); as a place where new words, numerals, illustrations, pictures, and objects can be displayed; as the first of many similar charts related to water vocabulary;

— printing favourite words on individual cards for children who wish to add them to their own collection.

Words We Use

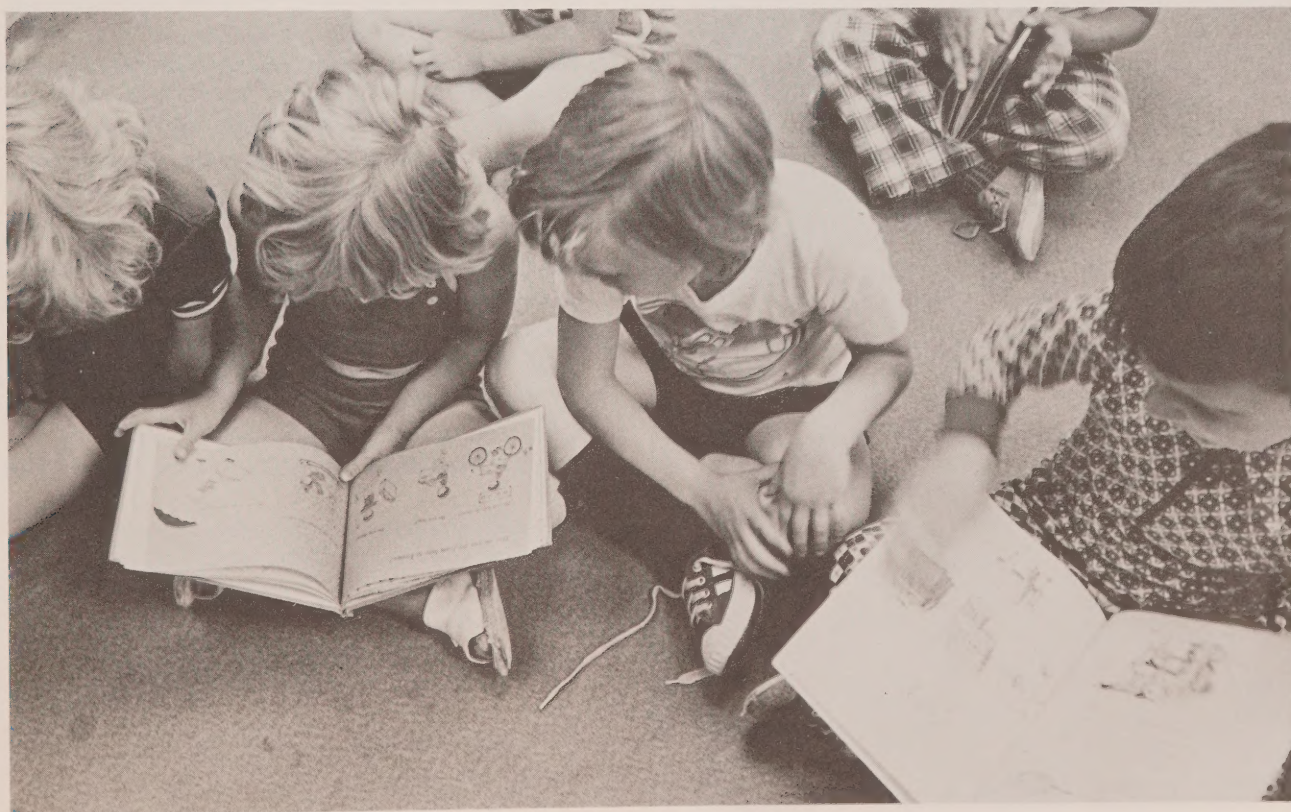
| | |
|------|---------|
| drip | splash |
| drop | trickle |
| gush | flow |

Episode 2 Discovering that books are a source of enjoyment, information, and personal enrichment

The Experience

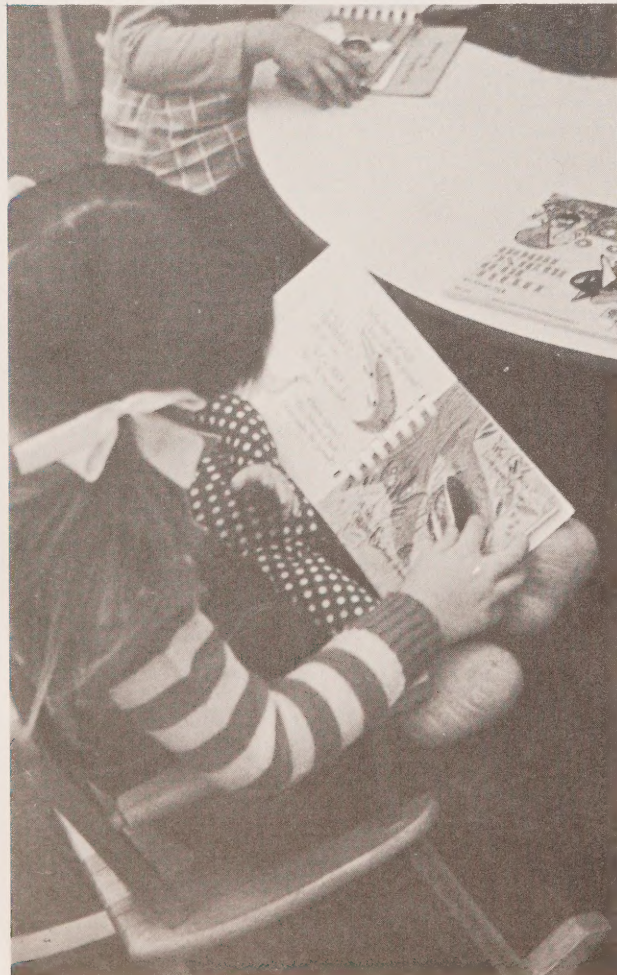
The adult can encourage enjoyment and understanding by:

- reading daily from favourite books;
- taping favourite selections and making the tapes and books available to all the children;
- selecting materials related to the interests and questions of the children (in this case, a teacher's personal collection of poetry, rhymes, and songs related to water and a book about fire-fighting);
- encouraging children to ask questions and comment on the ideas expressed;
- using open-ended questions such as *I wonder if...? Why do you think...? What will happen if...? How could it end...?*
- encouraging children to express impressions and understandings and to relate personal experiences to those in the book either orally in discussion or through role-playing, painting, construction, visits, music, or other books.



The children learn to enjoy, gain information, and respond personally to books by:

- listening to interesting words, phrases, and expressive segments of language used;
- responding to poetry through play with the rhythms and words, repetition, memorization, interpretation, using various media (voice, action, paint, musical instruments);
- listening to adults changing voices to express variations in tone, mood, or language;
- trying to understand the thoughts, feelings, information, and ideas expressed by an author;
- questioning, commenting upon, and discussing their impressions with their peers and teacher;
- developing, by listening to stories, those comprehension strategies they will use when reading;
- trying to relate to book characters and learning to laugh and cry with them;
- listening to re-readings of favourite stories until they become familiar;
- reading to a doll or friend, recording as they go, then listening to the replay;
- interpreting characters and stories through drama, dress-up, music, or puppets;
- reading many easy-to-read books;
- creating a variety of books for themselves and others;
- visiting the class library, the school resource centre, or city library to browse, scan, manipulate, select, and read from books of special interest.



Further Possibilities

The children have indicated an interest in investigating ships, fireboats, fire hydrants, and the general properties of water through:

- further activities at the water table;
- discussion of the tape-recording;
- discussion of responses and reactions to the books read.

The adult and the children plan an excursion to a harbour, marina, lake, boathouse, or dock. *The adult* can assist the children by:

- encouraging them to ask questions, anticipate solutions, share ideas, plans, and experiences, and to refine and record ideas that are important to them under such headings as:

- *Things We Know About Ships*
- *Questions We Want to Ask*
- *Where We May Find the Answers*

- planning and writing such functional items of correspondence with them as letters of permission, requests for parent volunteers, notes and reminders, letter to the harbour master, and thank-you notes;

- choosing resources related to the interests and experiences of the children.

Episode 3 Extending the repertoire of words and meanings required to understand ideas presented in print by focusing on a particular experience (an excursion to a water area)

The Experience

The adult can link language to the experience by:

- introducing new vocabulary related to the experience;
- encouraging the children to comment on and ask questions about the particular experience and others like it;
- directing the children's attention to specific aspects of the experience, helping them note details of shape, size, smell, sound, and colour, symbols, and textures;
- recording and photographing significant segments of the activity for subsequent use;
- directing the children's attention to those areas where the questions raised previously in the classroom can be answered and where their ideas can be verified;
- helping the children relate the experience to previous ones.

The children assimilate these ideas and meanings by:

- hearing the language patterns of the people encountered;
- hearing words and expressions that describe or identify the things they see along the way or at their destination;
- using this newly acquired vocabulary in conversing, questioning, asking and giving directions, or describing;
- discriminating among and attempting to imitate the sounds they hear (horns, machinery, cranes, sirens, gushing water);
- discriminating among, reading, and interpreting the graphic symbols they see (traffic signals, billboards, street names, marquees, flags, ship names, store signs, road signs).

Reading Possibilities: One Child's Activity

Bill:

- chooses blocks to represent the ideas he gained from the experience;
- creates a plan that changes as new materials and props are added;
- clarifies his thinking concerning the shape and general characteristics of boats as he builds one;
- carries on a monologue as he builds, using words for size, shape, and parts of a ship;
- role-plays, using his boat and the props he finds;
- invites several friends to become the crew; makes decisions and uses precise language in giving orders and instructions;
- makes (with the help of the teacher) a number of printed signs to identify his boat and prevent its destruction overnight.

The adult helps Bill understand his new ideas and link them to the ideas presented in print by:

- becoming involved in the construction of the boat or the role-playing;
- asking questions that help clarify Bill's thinking and language;
- introducing new related vocabulary;
- assisting in role clarification (the teacher could print labels for each crew member and discuss their duties);
- inviting an adult to speak on the roles of people the children met on the fireboat;
- bringing related objects, books, and other media into the classroom;
- displaying new words, signs, and symbols in the classroom;

For example, the signs requested by Bill, the ship's captain, might read:

- *This Is Bill's Boat – Do Not Destroy It*
- *The Amethyst* (the ship's name)
- *The Harbour Lights Inn*

- transcribing Bill's ideas;

(The teacher listens to Bill's account, asks for clarification, comments, and requests instructions [*What shall I write? What did you do first?*]. He or she then prints each idea using Bill's language and reads back the account of how *The Amethyst* was constructed so that Bill may make certain that all his important ideas have been included.)

- selecting related stories from basal readers or other books to help Bill apply and develop word and comprehension strategies.



Summary: Transcribing Thoughts, Feelings, and Actions Into Written Language

The Adult:

- listens to the child's story, responds and encourages, questions and comments to clarify meanings;
- asks the child to repeat the ideas he or she wishes to have recorded;
- records them using the child's language;
- reads the story back so the child may make certain that his or her key ideas have been recorded;
- draws the child's attention to specific words by asking the child to recall words that he or she considers important;
- copies these words onto cards;
- helps the child identify unique and distinctive characteristics that he or she might use as clues for recognition;
- helps the child compare these words to others in his or her collection.

The Children:

- copy the teacher's printing, a story, or words they think are important to them;
- create other stories by ordering and combining new words with basic words in their collection;
- sort and classify the words in their personal word collections into categories such as water, boats, sounds, or actions;
- play word games like "Swap", "I Spy", and bingo;
- find related books they can take home to read or have read to them and bring back new information which the teacher adds to the group chart.

Gaining Independence in Reading

This is a period of consolidation where a child becomes more independent and begins to use reading as a source of pleasure and information.

General Objectives

1. *to serve the child's need to understand the wide variety of language he or she will meet in reading;*

For this purpose, the teacher should:

- read aloud daily from a variety of materials such as collections of poetry, folk tales, plays, and legends;
- discuss interesting examples of language usage;
- provide opportunities to interact with and listen to people who use different language patterns;
- plan activities that will generate personal expression in a variety of language forms.

2. *to help each child develop positive personal values and attitudes towards reading;*

The teacher should:

- provide the time and the opportunity for all children to explore and read from a wide selection of books, magazines, newspapers, and other related materials;
- extend to the child the same privileges adults enjoy when reading (the child should be free to select ideas that are of personal interest and value, skip over passages at times, abandon books that fail to hold his or her interest, and discuss important ideas with others);
- relate reading to individual and class interests and investigations.



3. to encourage each child to become increasingly independent in reading;

The teacher should:

- use scheduled and incidental teaching episodes to help children develop a variety of word recognition strategies related to language structures, meanings (in context), word forms (spelling patterns), and phonic units;
- provide the children with numerous opportunities to practise and apply these strategies in such contexts as word and language games, personal writing, and reading from a wide selection of books.

4. to meet the child's need to understand and cope with the thoughts, feelings, opinions, and experiences of others as expressed in books and other printed materials;

The teacher should:

- schedule teaching episodes designed to help children develop flexible comprehension strategies (children should work in small groups and with a variety of materials including basal readers);
- help children to use personal experiences to interpret, relate, and evaluate the ideas presented by an author;
- provide numerous opportunities for children to interact with each other so that they may verify, clarify, and extend their understandings;
- strengthen the ability to assimilate new meanings by encouraging children to respond to books in personal ways through *the arts* (drama, music, art, construction), *all forms of communication* (speaking, writing, observing, viewing, listening, reading) and through *environmental studies* (using the people, places, and things in the environment as resources).

5. to give each child the opportunity to grow in reading competence at an individual pace and according to his or her personal learning style;

The teacher should:

- choose teaching strategies, activities, and materials that meet the particular needs of the children and match their experience and language facility;
- continue to assist the slow starters in gaining the reading strategies they require by using their own language and experience as the basis of instruction;
- help children master the basic words and patterns of expression through word games, personal word collections, writing, and easy reading materials;
- provide children who are limited in language and experience with opportunities to interact with people, places, and things beyond the classroom;
- help the more competent readers to use their reading skill to extend their experiences, understandings, and interests;
- guide the able readers in planning independent units of study and teach them the specialized reading strategies they will need to complete the task.

The teaching episodes selected for this section represent a small segment of the activities undertaken by a group of seven- to nine-year-olds. The intention is to provide the children with the opportunity to discover the true purpose of reading and to use their reading skill in meaningful situations.

The two teachers who are responsible for this program also provide daily sessions to help the children discover, practise, reinforce, and apply all the word strategies (including phonics) and comprehension strategies they require to deal with the ideas they encounter in reading.

Teaching-Learning Episodes

Episode 1 Personal interpretations of the feelings and actions of story characters may be expressed through the arts (movement, drama, music, and visual arts).

A child reads his or her story about imaginary creatures to the class and answers questions about their size and habits.

The adult helps the children to better understand and interpret what they read by:

- encouraging them to express ideas more vividly (one technique is to ask the children questions that require specific answers; for example, the teacher could ask the children to describe how these creatures move);
- discussing new words and expressions (e.g., *spiral, soar, flit, flicker, float, bounce, dart, hover, quiver, light as a feather, like a space walk, twirl, and flurry*);
- giving children the opportunity to extend concepts by expressing them in various ways (in this context, the teacher uses the gymnasium to allow the children to experiment with and better understand the movement of imaginary creatures);
- recognizing limitations in understanding and experience and adding materials that will clarify the concepts and stimulate further investigations (e.g., scarves, feathers, angora wool, cotton wool);



- providing a running commentary using related words, phrases, and expressions;
- adding appropriate music;
- bringing the class together to listen to a number of related poems;
- adding new words and planning for further extension of the ideas generated by the story.

One group of children plans to interpret the story through a movement sequence; they:

- read the story to recall the main ideas;
- organize these ideas into a logical sequence of events;
- interpret feelings and movements, using voice and facial expression;
- check their interpretations with the pupil-author;
- discard irrelevant sequences;
- make decisions about who will do what;
- integrate the individual parts into a whole, repeating, refining, and practising their interpretation;
- share their interpretation with their classmates, providing an opportunity for feedback and evaluation.

The observers:

- comment and ask questions to verify personal impressions;
- interpret and respond in a variety of ways.

One child, for example, asked about the creature's painful expression; the answer, "a migration headache", required much discussion and clarification. Several other children immediately planned to produce a number of adventure stories through movement. The teacher noted specific limitations in the concept of hibernation and migration and planned to move into a unit on *Preparing for Winter*.

Episode 2 Children discover that they can use their reading skill to expand personal interests and understandings.

The adult uses the unit *Preparing for Winter* to help children develop the study skills and comprehension strategies they require to use reading materials efficiently.

To accomplish this, the teacher:

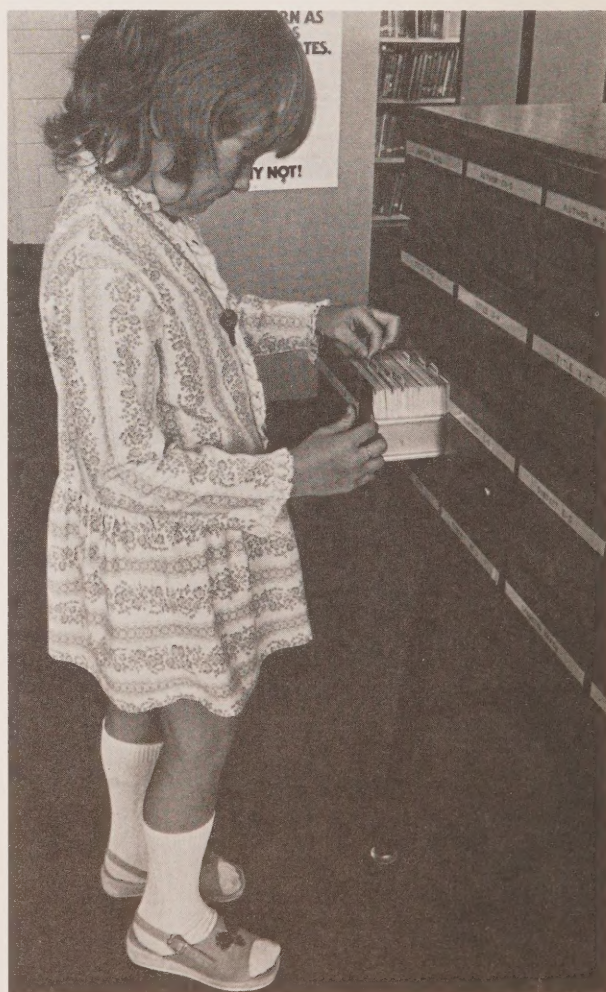
- encourages discussion of personal insights and understandings concerning seasonal changes and the ways in which people, animals, and trees respond;
- probes for deeper understanding of the vocabulary children use so freely – e.g., *evergreens*, *perennials*, *harvesting*, *winterizing*, *hibernating*, *migrating*. (The teacher uses questions like *Why? How do you know? Can you give an example?*);
- helps the children realize that all contributions are valuable and that ideas are clarified, validated, or modified through discussion;
- records the ideas generated by the discussion and introduces the children to a flow-chart;
- directs the group in selecting areas of study that are important to them;
- records resources the children suggest;
- writes and posts an outline, leaving spaces for the names of children who wish to study specific areas.

Six of the most competent children began an independent study. Their task was to discover the precise meaning of *hibernation* and *migration*, using the school library resource area, and to share their discoveries with the class.

The children make personal choices and assume responsibility for certain aspects of the study. They:

- use a number of decision-making and discussion techniques;
- think through ideas presented, make judgements concerning their validity, and assimilate those that are important to them;
- discover new language organization forms and learn their purpose and meaning (flow-chart, outline);
- set their own personal objectives for the study;
- select an area of interest and declare a personal commitment to it by signing their names;
- plan a specific area of study under the guidance of the teacher, determining what they want to know, where they can find it, and who can make the necessary arrangements.

Three other children volunteered to arrange a visit to two service stations so the group could find out what measures are taken to prepare automobiles for winter. They organized their ideas, recorded their plan on paper, checked it out with the teacher, and made the necessary telephone calls. A group of six attended to the letter writing. They drafted letters asking for permission (one to the principal, the others to the parents), read them to the class for reactions and amendments, had them typed by a parent volunteer, and looked after their distribution.



Episode 3 Reading competence develops in an environment that respects a child's need to test his or her growing reading power in activities of personal significance.

The children who have selected the concept of *hibernation* and *migration* as their unit of study plan their activities in the following stages. They:

- discuss the questions *What do we want to find out? Where? How?*
- sift and sort suggestions, using the language of debate;
- record the plans on paper and check them with an adult;
- decide to work in groups of three and to meet each day to share discoveries and to plan the next step;
- ask the parent volunteer (or librarian) for available resources and select those that are relevant and at their level.

The children share their information, discoveries, personal responses, and evaluations with their classmates by:

- making a booklet with a table of contents, a simple summary, and illustrations contributed by classmates;
- making a summary sheet of the main ideas for each child;
- making a self-marking quiz about hibernation and migration, a crossword puzzle, a sheet of riddles, and a word game to add to the game centre;
- choosing a chairman to introduce the topic, define the terms, introduce the presenters, summarize, direct questions, and invite comments;
- summarizing what they have gained from the whole experience.

The adult helps the children develop the reading strategies they need to gain the information they require by:

- helping them to become more specific and directing their attention to birds and animals within their own environment (at this stage real experiences are still the primary resource; books are used to extend and verify personal observations);
- reviewing strategies used in consulting resource materials (table of contents, index, pictures with captions, charts, headings);
- guiding them in developing an understanding of how an author uses pictures, context clues, and tables to help the reader understand his or her message;
- meeting the groups daily to assess their progress and to offer further guidance;
- helping the groups organize their materials for presentation to their classmates.



Episode 4 Vocabularies and language understandings are extended and enriched through real experiences with people, places, and things beyond the classroom.

Two groups of children visited two service stations accompanied by two experienced parent volunteers.

The adults:

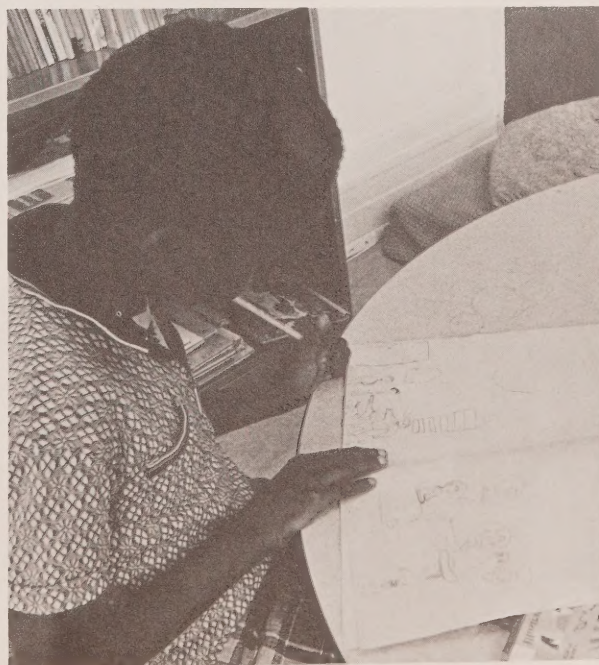
- stopped during the walk, directed observations, provided language to extend vocabularies, and used cameras and tape-recorders to highlight specific aspects of the journey;
- extended vocabularies to include new words encountered (*anti-freeze, piston, carburetor, axle, snow tire, hoist, grease, oil, gasoline, radiator, chemicals*);
- introduced new forms of printed communication (manuals, price lists, measurement units, tables, sketches, pictures, tire sizes, road maps);
- encouraged the children to sketch and record the names of new tools and machinery;
- discussed the sights, sounds, and smells encountered, encouraging the children to use precise words to describe and define them (*slippery, pungent, penetrating, crash, clang, squeal, hiss, carbon, explode, deflate, inflate*).

When the groups returned to class, the teacher led the discussion by:

- asking questions to prompt more information and clarification;
- making arrangements for the presentation of the tape recording and polaroid pictures that helped to present the total experience;
- placing an identification box in a corner containing such items as a funnel, siphon, oil can, wrench, steering wheel, nuts and bolts, tire gauge, dip stick, thermometer, and road maps, and later placing them in various classroom centres for use in construction and role-playing.

The children:

- recorded information they considered important in their diaries;
- produced a class book entitled *Our Visit to the Service Station*;



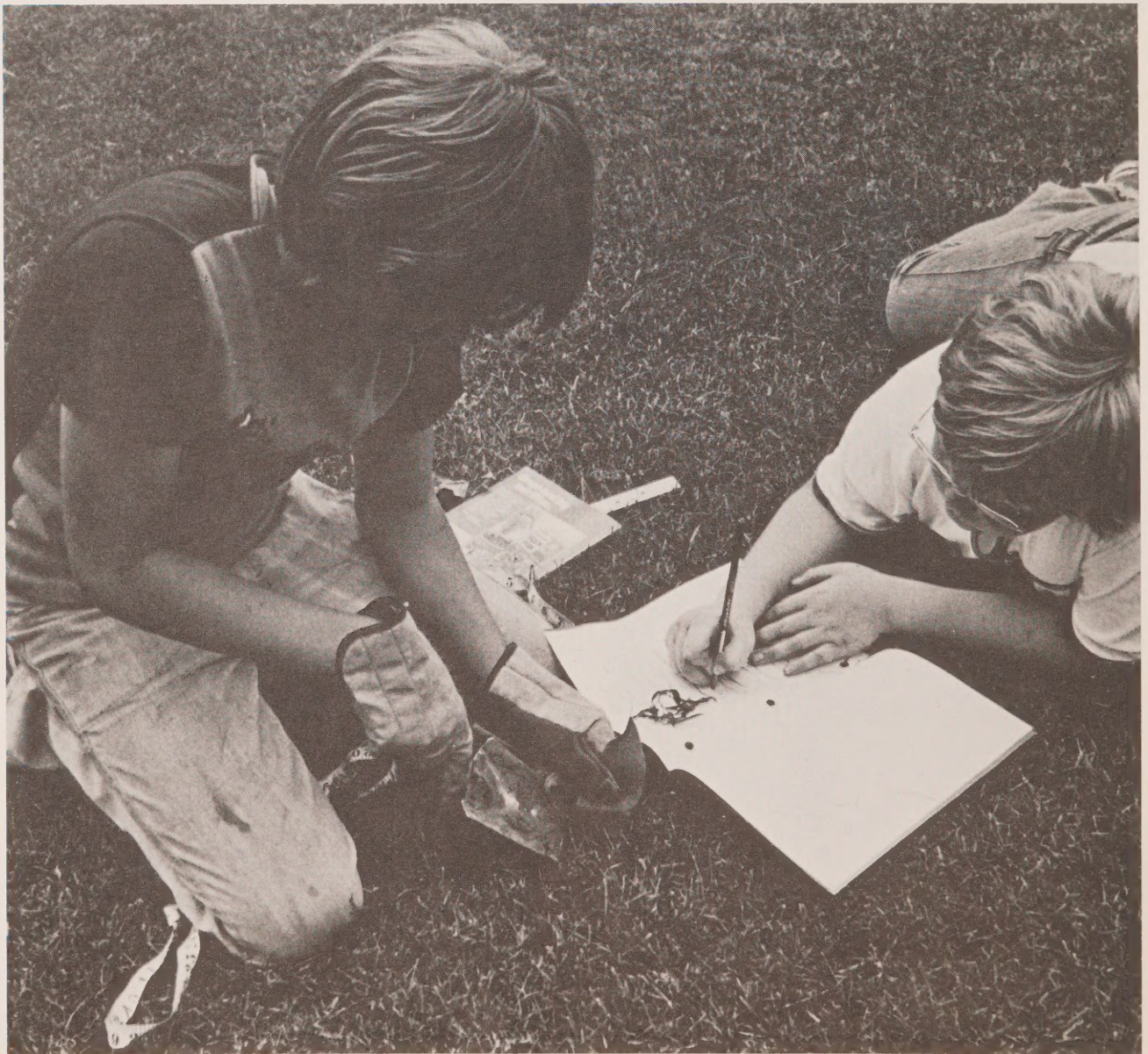
- produced several booklets — *Old Cars, The Garage Mechanic, Cars, This Is a Car, Our Trip to the Service Station* — using promotion folders obtained from car dealers, car magazines, easy-to-read books, the polaroid pictures, and calendars portraying antique cars (particularly appropriate for those with reading difficulties);
- found the necessary words for the captions for their artwork with the help of the teacher and the adult volunteers;
- prepared with older students a game that involved matching pictures of cars, tools, and other items with words;
- constructed a model of the service station using tinker toys, lego, spools, and scrap material;
- set up, in a corner of the room, a service station, which provided many opportunities for games involving mathematics, role-playing, and writing signs and labels;
- produced a class summary entitled *We Learned About Winterization*;
- wrote a collection of factual and imaginative stories about cars.

Gaining Power in and Through Reading

The child has reached a stage when growth in vocabulary and language facility is largely dependent upon his or her ability to apply reading skills. The child will need to refine and extend these reading capabilities to cope with written language of increasing complexity and must, therefore, develop specialized reading strategies to comprehend a wide range of materials.

It is difficult to assign specific age or grade levels to reading development. Some children become competent readers in a relatively short space of time; others grow into reading at a slower pace and may require specialized materials, guidance, and teaching strategies. A few children, because of neurological, physical, intellectual, emotional, and/or linguistic disabilities, may be incapable of learning to read without specialized assistance.

In spite of the wide range of differences in learning pace, style, and experience, most children begin to read by the time they are seven, are reasonably confident by age nine, and will extend their reading skills to cope with an increasing variety of reading materials.



General Objectives

1. to lead each child to the realization that reading can enrich one's personal experiences throughout life;

To accomplish this, the teacher should:

- provide each child with opportunities to pursue personal interests and investigations and to apply his or her reading skill to a rich variety of resource materials;
- help children gain the ability to recognize and appreciate quality and excellence in writing through constant exposure to an extensive and diversified selection of reading materials — novels, biographies, folk tales, myths, current reading materials, poetry, etc. (daily reading sessions should involve some communal reading and a calibre of discussion that encourages and respects personal responses and opinions);
- recognize that reading is basically a private affair and provide sufficient time each day for each child to read for pleasure, relaxation, and enjoyment.

2. to extend and refine the child's understanding of various language patterns, styles, and forms;

The teacher should:

- provide children with numerous opportunities to interact with people of various language backgrounds;
- retrieve and record segments of written and oral language that are especially expressive or pleasing for discussion;
- provide children with opportunities to discuss their personal writing and speaking efforts with others in order to find new ways of communicating ideas;
- arouse interest in the changing nature of words and expressions (origins, current expressions, creation of new words).

3. to meet the child's need to cope with the increasingly complex ideas, information, expectations, and values he or she encounters in reading;

The teacher should:

- provide the instruction and practice that each child needs to master the essential word recognition strategies and to apply them correctly and effectively (context or meaning, structure and phonic clues, and dictionary skills);
- help children acquire the specialized reading and information-processing strategies they require to use resource and reference materials productively and efficiently;

- encourage children to become critical readers through discussion and analysis of current communication media (children could examine the validity and reliability of statements and opinions, analyse materials to discover bias and subtle meanings, and compare different accounts of the same events in newspapers, magazines, cartoons, radio, and television);

- introduce teaching episodes designed to develop comprehension strategies that will enable children to reach deeper levels of interpretation and understanding.

4. to give the child opportunities to become more involved in his or her own learning and to help the child become a respected member of his or her peer group;

The teacher should:

- help children develop effective group interaction techniques so that working as a group is a satisfying and productive activity;
- involve children in selecting, planning, organizing, and carrying through units of study that deal with problems related to their needs and interests;
- provide children with opportunities to share interests, skills, and expertise in the field of writing.

Poetry and creative writing seminars, tutorial sessions for skill development and practice, book clubs, novel study, choral-speaking groups, playwriting, drama, and puppetry workshops are only a few possibilities.

5. to continue to help each child develop a realistic and positive view of himself or herself as a reader;

In this context, the teacher should:

- recognize that at this stage most children are aware of their own capabilities and, using a variety of techniques, encourage them to reveal their feelings about reading (techniques could include: teacher-pupil conferences, informal chats about books the children have read, teaching episodes, informal inventories of skills and interests, drama and art activities, construction, and writing);
- relate teaching strategies and materials to the specific needs and interests of the children;
- involve children in the process of identifying specific areas of weakness, selecting appropriate materials, and planning corrective and practice activities;
- use the *people* resources of the classroom effectively by encouraging the children to identify the strengths, talents, and interests they wish to share with others;
- help children recognize that, although reading is important, the primary resources for information and experience are the people, things, events, and places of real life.

The episodes that follow feature a group of nine- to eleven-year-olds and describe how they apply their skill as readers to more complex language structures and materials and gain new understandings, insights, and skills in the process.



Teaching-Learning Episodes

Episode 1 A child uses his or her full capacity as a reader and everything he or she has learned when interacting with books.

The children, divided into groups of eight, select books to read and discuss. They have had many opportunities to listen to, discuss, share, and read various books. In the process, they have:

- developed comprehension strategies for dealing with ideas presented in print;
- been involved in small-group interaction and have practised basic discussion and decision-making techniques;
- mastered most word-recognition strategies;
- read many short stories, articles, and other materials and developed an awareness of how an author uses character, plot, and setting to create interest.

The children set up their groups to exchange, challenge, and consider each other's opinions and interpretations. They:

- set group and individual objectives for reading and decide what should be accomplished each day;
- meet daily to share personal impressions and interpretations and to formulate questions about character, place, time, and plot, relating personal experiences to the story and examining various points of view within the books.

Children profit from reading, discussing, and studying the form and style of well-written materials. They:

- recognize and appreciate an author's ability to make his or her characters live and to involve the reader through the use of exciting language;
- search for clues to variations in mood, tone, and feeling and examine how they are created;
- get to know characters better by following them in a variety of sequences and relating their actions to life;
- retrieve segments of expressive language for discussion and add them to their personal collections.

The final step in listening and reading is responding in personal ways to the ideas gleaned through reading.

The children:

- discuss and devise various means whereby they can extend their understandings, use new ideas and information, and express their personal interpretations;
- select the ways that are new and appropriate for the ideas they wish to share; *for example, they can:*
- write other stories, placing the original characters in another setting;
- examine what the author is saying by relating his or her ideas to the ideas, people, and happenings of the real world today;

- tape brief selections from books that prove these points;
- make puppets to represent the main characters of each book and allow them to meet on a desert island;
- select for an award a “character of the month” from the books read and discuss the reasons for their choice;
- dramatize a scene from a book;
- play the role of a favourite character for a day;
- assume the role of a literary critic and write to the author or his or her publisher offering personal and group reactions to the book.

To encourage understanding and sensitivity, as well as enhance the children's interest in reading, *the adult* can:

- select books to which the children can relate and which will extend their understanding of human behaviour;
 - plan daily sessions of questions and comments that will deepen and clarify their personal understandings;
 - willingly discuss elements of the story (e.g., character, plot, theme) that interest the children;
 - develop a critical attitude and foster a spirit of inquiry by encouraging the children to question;
 - establish a close partnership with a librarian to facilitate the selection of books that will help the children grow in their appreciation of different historical periods, cultures, and environments;
 - stimulate children's curiosity by telling them just enough about the books to suggest that they are exciting and worth opening;
 - leave the books for the children to handle and to scan so that their final choices will involve personal commitment.
- The adult* can help the children develop their comprehension and interpretive skills by providing situations in which they can communicate their ideas to others. In this connection, the teacher can:
- meet all the groups to discuss and plan ways of sharing personal interpretations;
 - help the children express why they read what they read.

Episode 2 Given the opportunity to discuss his or her ideas, the child may learn how to extend his or her findings.

Each group study of a book has led to a number of individual interests and investigations. Three main group studies involving different cultures and environments were undertaken (the Ojibway and Cree Indians of Northern Ontario, Medieval England, and Ancient Egypt).



The groups:

- discussed, summarized, and recorded their questions and the general purpose of the investigations;
- summarized and organized the ideas presented into specific topics of interest and study (a flow-chart outline);
- suggested and recorded several plans for achieving their objectives and following through;
- decided upon the most promising plan of action;
- identified a wide variety of resources that could provide the information they required;
- checked their plan and resources with teacher and class;
- developed and posted a plan of action (who will do what, when, how);
- made the necessary arrangements (letters of permission; appointments with historians, specialists, anthropologists; reservations for related films and filmstrips, and for scheduled visits to the library, museum, Indian reserve, or a digging).

The adult can help the children devise appropriate ways of acting upon their ideas by:

- guiding the groups in setting realistic goals and formulating specific questions related to topics of interest;
- helping each group to develop their unit of study in ways that take advantage of individual strengths and abilities;
- intervening where groups appear to be facing problems they cannot resolve;
- adding personal information and staff resources where required;
- volunteering specific services for the plan of action;
- assisting in the writing and editing of letters of permission and invitations and checking on arrangements;
- observing, listening, guiding, and acting as a resource for the groups while they work.

The adult teaches specialized skills when needed. These include:

- use of reference and resource materials (table of contents, checking publication dates, reading graphs, charts, and tables); interview techniques; summarizing of information; organization of ideas and information.

The teacher can continue to give special assistance by:

- meeting groups requiring special direction and assistance on a regular basis;
- finding suitable materials for children who cannot read well enough to cope with reference materials (e.g., easy-to-read books, pictures, filmstrips, tapes, and first-hand information);
- supplying materials required in the various work areas;
- involving the children in planning and organizing the classroom for the specific activities undertaken (e.g., research, construction, writing, sculpting, music, drama, experiments, painting, cooking, and serving).

Episode 3 Investigations undertaken by the children can take many forms.

In this classroom the children were mainly interested in cultural adaptation to the environment, communication, religion, and the arts.

The children:

- used first hand experiences wherever possible and held group meetings regularly to report their findings, relating them to the original purposes;
- weighed and checked evidence presented in a variety of ways, selected relevant information, decided what topics required further study;
- kept notes, made sketches, taped interviews, took photographs, and discovered that much of the information they required was transmitted through maps, graphs, diagrams, charts, and figures;
- decided to enrich personal understandings of the cultures by recreating various representative elements (they constructed models of pyramids, castles, canoes, a mummy, a canal, a drawbridge, and a teepee);
- experimented with dyes and with making paper, reed pens, clay tablets, and a stylus;
- expressed ideas in various art forms and designs;
- made pottery, jewellery, ornaments, and beadwork;
- designed and sewed costumes from a variety of fabrics, skins, hides, and furs;
- drew maps;
- used the sandtable to demonstrate irrigation;
- prepared foods, enacted special ceremonials, and collected artifacts (or replicas) characteristic of each culture;
- read a wide collection of poems, myths, folktales, and novels;
- explored a variety of native languages by listening to speakers, tapes, and records;
- interviewed and listened to many people who had information to share.

Each group recreated a specific feast-day ritual or ceremony for the rest of the class.

Summaries of the units of study took many forms, and included editorials, letters, descriptive reports, news events, photographs, sketches, paintings, advertisements, and bibliographies. These were reviewed and edited, and then collated into a book for the library.

The adult:

- meets individuals, small groups, and the class;
- relates the study to current issues to sharpen perception of the world and of the people who inhabit it;
- encourages discussion to help verify information provided by the mass media;
- helps children understand and appreciate the values, modes of behaviour, and points of view in cultures different from their own;
- recognizes that the best evaluation of what children have gained from the study involves talking over their plans with them and observing them as they follow through their plan of action.

Assessment: General Guidelines

Reading is a continuous and changing process, an inward process, which, for the most part, is not directly observable. This inward process of *comprehension* is the principal determinant of a reader's success.

When one considers the intricate nature of comprehension, the multiplicity of content a reader encounters, and the great diversity of language, experience, and ability among children, it is reasonable to conclude that a completely satisfactory reading test has not yet been devised. A good indicator of a child's reading development is his or her performance in all reading activities and his or her ability to use this skill with purpose, pleasure, and personal satisfaction.

Every activity in which children are involved will provide a teacher with information that will be useful in planning activities that will help children become successful readers. The teacher may find the following questions useful as he or she listens, observes, and interacts with children.

Teaching Episodes with Books

Language Power

How does the child use speech (haltingly, clearly . . .)?

What language does the child speak (dialect, native tongue . . .)? Does he or she have the vocabulary to describe, explain, question, plan?

Does he or she express ideas (related, organized, complex . . .)? How does the child express them (words, sentences — simple or complex)?

Does the child assimilate and use new vocabulary?

Does he or she use a variety of clues (structure, context, phonic) in attacking words and matching structures?

Has the child accumulated a basic store of common words and patterns of expression that he or she can recognize?

Does the child read with understanding (word by word or in thought units)?

Comprehension

Does the child have a background of information and concepts that can be used in relating to the printed page?

Does he or she establish purposes for reading?

Does the child scan material to gain an overview, a general impression? (Does the child use pictures, headings for this purpose?)

Can he or she relate personal experiences to those expressed by an author?

Can he or she anticipate the development of the plot?

Does the child select ideas that are important to himself or herself?

Does the child assimilate and use the new ideas presented?

Can the child draw his or her own conclusions?

Can the child read critically (judge, determine validity)?

Does he or she appreciate humour?

Does the child appreciate beauty and clarity of expression?

Can he or she determine the purpose, intent, or tone of a passage?

Does the child transfer new language structures and forms into his or her own expression?

Does the child express a personal response to the materials he or she reads in a variety of ways (language, art . . .)?

Personalized Reading

Does the child like to be read to?

Does he or she like to read (when, how, how often . . .)?

What are the child's specific interests?

Does he or she read a variety of books?

Teacher-Child Conferences

How does the child view himself or herself as a reader (positively, negatively)?

What does reading mean to the child personally?

What strategies does he or she use in reading? (Note the child's description of his or her method of tackling words and ideas.)

Has the child identified resources that can provide assistance (people, materials . . .)?

Does he or she reveal feelings of frustration or fear?

Does he or she interact freely? Cautiously?

What are the child's personal aspirations? Talents?

Units of Study (Individual and Group)

Assessment of performance and achievement in these situations might involve a teacher's records, a small group's observations and reactions, and a child's personal response to the activity in relation to:

- ability to set realistic goals for the study;
- decision-making in planning for action;
- awareness and use of a variety of resources;
- ability to use specialized strategies with resource materials;
- quality of discussion;
- interview techniques;
- ability to summarize and organize information for efficient recall;
- ability to share views and responses with classmates in a variety of ways;
- ability to adjust material and mode of sharing to the particular audience involved;
- ability to answer questions and receive constructive comments from classmates;
- ability to verbalize personal insights gained from the experience;
- ability to evaluate personal and group experience.

There are many approaches to evaluation in reading, each a valuable resource to educators, but care should be taken to avoid placing too much confidence in any one technique.